

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

REPORT of the PROCEEDINGS OF THE 81st AUTUMN DELEGATE
MEETING held at HEAD OFFICE on SATURDAY, 12th and SUNDAY,
13th OCTOBER, 1985.

Attendances:

	<u>No. of Delegates</u> <u>sitting</u>	<u>Branches not represented</u>
<u>Saturday - 1.30 p.m.</u>	22	Bolton, Glasgow, Hammersmith Lancaster, North East, S. Yorkshire, Swansea
<u>Saturday - 3.50 p.m.</u>	28	Bolton, Hammersmith, Swansea Lancaster, S. Yorkshire.
<u>Sunday - 10.20 a.m.</u>	28	Hammersmith, Lancaster, S. Yorkshire
<u>Sunday - 3.30 p.m.</u>	28	Hammersmith, Lancaster, S. Yorkshire

Financial Report:

Collections: Saturday	£35.62
Sunday	43.24
 Canteen Expenses - £106.68.	
" Receipts - £119.01.	

This report should be read in conjunction with the EC Report to ADM and the Agenda.

SATURDAY:

Election of Chair: One nomination - Com. H. Valor. Com. Valor elected to Chair and delegates decided not to elect a Vice-Chair.

Branches which had not submitted Forms 'C': Letters of apology were read from Hammersmith, Manchester and Islington, the latter submitting a draft Form 'C'.

Hopwood (S.W. London): Branch has instructed delegates to vote against branches sitting who have not submitted Forms 'C'; this is not democratic.

RESOLUTION - Deutz (E. London) and Lester (Camden) "That Islington, Hammersmith and Manchester delegates be allowed to sit." CARRIED 9 - 2

Lancaster and Manchester Branches asked permission to sit, although neither branch's delegates were present.

RESOLUTION - Lester (Camden) and H. Cottis (E. London) "That Lancaster and Guildford delegates be not allowed to sit." CARRIED 7 - 6

Bristol Branch (a new branch) asked permission to sit.

RESOLUTION - Coleman (Islington) and Hopwood (S.W. London) "That Bristol delegates be allowed to sit." CARRIED 13 - 1

Guildford Branch delegates were now present together with their Form 'C'.

RESOLUTION - Coleman (Islington) and Hopwood (S.W. London) "That the previous resolution be rescinded with regard to Guildford Branch as an explanation has been given." CARRIED 10 - 4

E.C. Report: Executive Committee:

Deutz (E. London): Concerned that EC sometimes started without a quorum and amended something which a committee of four members were concerned with.

General Secretary: Don't get impression EC meets regularly without a quorum.

Branches and membership:

Hopwood (S.W. London): Central branch members should be 184 not 199.

General Secretary: Total membership in Junewas 602 - in October 596. Had to do the best he could from HO records due to some missing Forms 'C'.

Agenda Item 1(d) - Davies (N.W. London): re use of Head Office, one reason we wanted to use it is that it is not used enough. Our plans did not conflict with any plans of S.W. London branch - they would have benefited from any audience.

Cook (Birmingham): At what point was S.W. London consulted, or the propaganda committee.

Davies: We did not in the past consult the Propaganda Committee. We did not consult S.W. London branch - we don't feel they have the monopoly of H.O.

Hopwood (S.W. London): How did N.W. London know they would not conflict with S.W. London when they had not consulted them.

Davies: Branch wrote to EC in July - would have been plenty of time to co-operate with S.W. London.

Coleman (Islington): Branch resents this being on Agenda and the time being wasted. Item contains a deception - that a refusal was given to N.W. London. They were asked a question but did not give an answer so no conclusion could be reached by the EC. Basic of organisation - that a meeting in a branch room of another branch needs consultation. It is their area - they are having their diary written for them by other branches. Not a new policy - branches have stuck to their own areas but if necessary it should be laid down at this ADM. Branches should not just run isolated events but follow up events later with posters, handbills etc.

Young (N.W. London): Questions raised to N.W. London was precisely to refuse the request. How are you going to define areas - borough boundaries? Whole thing is absurd.

Lester (Camden): Detailed history of request and branch reply re use of HO in series of meetings in 1984. In present case EC contrived to withhold permission. There was need to get advertising in time. Forced to make alternative arrangements for the three meetings as time had run out. Action of EC not in best interest of the Party, introduced new policy. Agree branches should not carry out activity in another branch's area likely to conflict with other branches or HO activity - there was no conflict. We have always held successful meetings at HO with its facilities and suitable size.

Hopwood (S.W. London): HO should be used more often but it would have been courteous to know what was being planned. S.W. London could not have held a meeting on the same topic as that planned by Camden and N.W. London. Camden and N.W. London members don't come when we do hold meetings.

RESOLUTION - Colborn (N.E. Branch) and Graham (Bristol) "Next business." LOST 10 -11

Cottis (E. London): Deplored that we have to deal with a battle of two rival factions Use of HO - why not? Never known about not coming into other areas. Where will the Party be if members don't travel to do the work at HO and so on. No reason why EC should have hedged - they were right about S.W. London not being consulted. We should be more generous to one another.

L. Cox (EC): A request for further information is not same as a refusal. HO belongs to Party as a whole as well as being used by the local branch but let's work in a co-operative manner. Maybe would have been more sensible to grant the request - not worth the aggro.

Atkinson (General Secretary): When meetings have been held at HO it has either been through the Propaganda Committee or in liaison with S.W. London branch. EC wanted a reply from N.W. London.

Edwards (W. London): Seems there was a departure from usual procedure that branches have obtained permission readily to use HO. Branches should have been asked to liaise with the local branch.

Howlett (Camden): Urgency came about due to the delay of the EC.

K. Knight (N.W. London): Farcical situation if you stick to areas. Islington meets at border of another area.

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Venzi (Glasgow): Why did three branches north of the river want to hold meetings at HO. Not just an overlap of areas like Islington and N.W. London. If Camden wanted to hold meetings in Glasgow I would want an explanation.

Maratty (North East): EC to blame for this situation - should have given permission.

RESOLUTION - Edwards and Nicholson (West London): "This Delegate Meeting recommends that when branches want to use Head Office for meetings they advise the Central Organiser and S.W. London branch before requesting permission from the EC."

Edwards (West London): Trying to bring the discussion to a conclusion. This would make things clear - best way out.

AMENDMENT - Maratty (North East) and Lester (Camden) "Delete 'and S.W. London branch'."

Lester (Camden): If we advise the Central Organiser he does the rest - it is his job.

Ross (N.W. London): Branch has never been approached by Central Organiser - is it feasible that this sort of contact will be carried out. There is a faction somewhere trying to make it difficult for some branches like the one I am in.

AMENDMENT CARRIED 10 - 7; SUB.-RESOLUTION CARRIED 11 - 3

G. Slapper (Propaganda Committee): Took 1 hour 20 mins to drive from N.W. London's area to HO so why would anyone wish to organise propaganda in an area so far away.

Are there no comparable places in Camden and N.W. London with capacity and refreshments

A. Bradley (S.W. London): They are to be congratulated for organising meetings so far ahead - what is the urgency for leaflets from July for meetings running October-March. We are having our diary written for us.

Davies (N.W. London): We want to use HO because it is HO. Branch surprised EC withheld permission. EC never said they had not refused permission. We would have liaised with S.W. London.

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement: Coleman (Islington): Higher advertising budget should be made for World Socialist, now into 4th issue. We must spend money on advertising.

Sub-committees which have not reported: Hopwood (for Ballot Committee) regretted no report, but felt that sub-committees should account for themselves.

Easton (Media): Has not completed report: now a vacancy on the committee - three members would be better.

Atkinson (General Secretary): Most important committee is Publicity and we can't get a response for assistance - only two members, one of whom is the H.O.A.

Legacies Committee - Agenda Item 3(a): Simpkins (S.W. London): General opinion that we should not act as a landlord because it would create all sorts of problems - if someone got behind with rent etc.

Graham (Bristol): Very strongly against Party acting as a landlord. Long history of refusing to accept money with strings, from the living, so why not also from the dead.

General Secretary (and Legacies Committee): Awaiting a statement from the Bank (Executors) which we have to sign to accept the house. Party's response very balanced. This is last opportunity to do anything about it.

Colborn (North East): We should take the property - it will increase in value and be a source of income.

RESOLUTION - Davies and Young (N.W. London): "This Delegate Meeting is against accepting the house in Derby if we have to act as landlord."

Davies (N.W. London): We should not act as a landlord and if you leave it empty you would have to spend money on it in 15 years.

McColl (Bournemouth): Keep the house and use it purely for propaganda for branches who don't want to meet in their own area.

Cook (Birmingham): Separate question of acting as a landlord from accepting the legacy then ask the landlord question separately.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Opposed to Party being landlords. Party stands for a different way of dealing with things. What would your parliamentary candidate say to question of the Party being in Court in dispute with a member of the working class?

Colborn (North East): We want world without money so do we ~~ch~~ how our money out of the door?

Coleman (Islington): Conference discussed this and information sent to branches for their views. EC has made a decision and should get on with it. What is good enough for individuals in the Party should be good enough for the Party. Who has put money in our collections? Party owns HO and may have to possess other buildings in due course.

Easton (Islington): Important point is credibility. We can choose if we have a member in this house for rent - none of us can choose to have money - we have to do so to survive. Party has no control over what individual members do to survive, nor over where bank interest comes from.

General Secretary: The resolution needs amending to separate the two things.

Howell (Guildford): People know we're going to need money to achieve conditions where we don't need it. Think of the house as £15,000 - you could buy a new printing machine, advertising etc.

Hopwood (S.W. London): House needs some money spent on it and at end of 15 years the money would be realised.

K. Knight (N.W. London): Have we approached housing associations who might take it on 15 year lease with view to purchasing. Should explore ways of putting it to use but not act as a landlord.

McColl (Bournemouth): How qualified are those who say what has to be done? We could hold it for 15 years by putting a high rent. We should spend the minimum amount on it and sell after 15 years.

P. Lawrence (EC): Property in process of transfer to the Party following EC resolution and branch views. EC resolution passed by slim majority. Would strongly urge DM to pass this resolution to strengthen the hand of the EC against becoming a landlord. Would you be prepared to go to court to evict a member of the working class? Being a landlord involves this capability. This is something the Party could never do.

L. Cox (EC/Trustee): Do we have right to deny the proceeds of a sale in 15 years' time when the Party might need that money?

Doutz (E. London): Divided views in branch. Only one member asked whether in 15 years time there would be Socialism.

Grant (EC/Trustee): I opposed acceptance of these premises. If I were an enemy of the Party trying to find a way of getting the party tearing itself to pieces this would seem a fairly effective way; debating for 15 years the problems of property. If we were very skint and had not benefited from generous bequests - but it seems there is only real option of being landlords. We should have nothing to do with it. There is something useful to be learned from this by those who mean to leave bequests to the Party.

AMENDMENT - Graham and Percy-Smith (Bristol): "Delete 'if we have to act as landlords'."

Graham: Point well made re difficulties of becoming a landlord and number of suggestions of how property can be used.

General Secretary: Some members have shown an interest in living in the house at a nominal rent - possible to put someone in and let them be responsible for the rates and repairs during 15 years.

Coleman (Islington): Vote this down and leave options open. We should have these discussions going on in the branches and the widest possible decisions.

P. Lawrence (EC): Concerned about effect on EC of this resolution if passed as amended - EC would have to scrap the whole thing. Should keep options open.

K. Knight (N.W. London): Delegate Meetings only make recommendations but some take it as law. We should not be bound by Delegate Meeting decisions and I have been got at over this. Against amendment because some on the EC would have to abide by it.

General Secretary: Branch views were about 50/50. 9 - 7 Branches in favour.

AMENDMENT LOST 3 - 17; RESOLUTION LOST 11 - 13

Parliamentary Committee: A. Bradley (S.W. London): Branch deplores fact that there is only one member on the committee.

Propaganda: Agenda Item 2(a): Coleman (Islington): Important to urge branches to try outdoor meetings in their areas. Hyde Park and Tower Hill are tourist areas and less places for serious propaganda. Attempt made at Clapham Common but there were not speakers and members to support them. Islington has started meetings at Highbury Fields and people are starting to come along. Branches should contact Propaganda Committee who will appeal to members to support them. Branches should not be left to do this alone. Members speaking on the platform do so on behalf of the Party.

Cook (Birmingham): This year branch has gone back to outdoor meetings and there is a cumulative effect. You have to plug away and it aids lit. sales. Very important to talk to kids who get quite fascinated when you listen to what they have to say and don't make fun of them.

Agenda Item 2(b): K. Knight (N.W. London): We should allow opponents our platform only after meeting has been going for some time. We want to answer objections to statements made by the speaker but if opponent doesn't feel his question properly dealt with you can allow him the platform for limited time - 10 minutes or less. Chairman and speaker should remain silent during this time; speaker should judge conditions prevailing. Distinction between vociferous heckler and violent disrupters - it's a matter of judgment. Some members cover the Party's name, some leave it - we should do this.

Lester (Camden): Outlined similar guidelines. Has never known that we cover the Party's name.

McColl (Bournemouth): Vital we cover Party's name - audience is transient and could think an opponent is a party speaker.

Coleman (Islington): Agreed with all that has been said. Fitness of a speaker to speak is not only related to the knowledge of that speaker but to the ability of that speaker to behave in the right manner for a representative of the Party and therefore what the EC has done in acting under Rule 18 has been demonstrated as correct.

Maratty (North East): How does speaker decide who is a serious political opponent? Have been told at opponents' meetings that I am not a serious opponent. I am a 'disrupter' of other parties' meetings because I ask serious questions.

Easton (Islington): Most people would think Com. Maratty a serious questioner because they would recognise other parties are timorous in not letting a questioner have his say. In the case known about people had demonstrated over a period of 1½ years that they were not interested in the democratic rights of this Party or anyone else speaking in Hyde Park.

L. Cox (EC): First guidelines would be using your own experience of a particular disrupter - this would tell you this is a person who is part of an orchestrated campaign to disrupt as many meetings as possible and their aim is on record in the national press. Opponents are invited onto our platform, the name covered and they are given a fair hearing and then demolished by the speaker by members who know how to conduct a meeting sensibly and democratically. The other category is beyond my comprehension.

C. Slapper (EC): It is within the bounds of this meeting to deal with recent incidents.

Graham (Bristol): Propaganda Committee mentions the suspension of a member under Rule 18 - can questions be raised on this.

C. Slapper (EC/Islington): Different speakers may have different approaches but when someone wishes to smash our meetings it is disturbing to have them come on the platform to smash the meeting from there.

McGregor (Glasgow): Should give an opponent the platform but if it goes on week after week you are being made a mug of.

K. Knight (N.W. London): The opponents allowed on the platform made statements about their intentions later. There is no way you should judge individuals from your own standpoint. How do you know this individual is going to do what he says. Opponents claim they're not allowed to put questions, get up, and do something different. Easy to turn those circumstances to your advantage. As I understand it, the individual concerned was not a violent disrupter of the meeting.

Coleman (Propaganda Committee): Members were threatened - a pregnant comrade was threatened with a punch in the stomach. These were disrupters, not hecklers, and this group has been stopped. It is a pity that the person barred from Hyde Park was able to say that an SPGB speaker came to court to defend his right to speak, and throws into question whether or not we have a consistent attitude to democracy. We can deal with hecklers. Can't recall going to the police until we had threats and abuse.

Young (N.W. London): Not one of those concerned ever made slightest attempt to physically or actively interfere. People come to Hyde Park to take the mickey - often their argument is demolished and they learn. We should ask opponent if he wants to ask a question and whether he represents any political organisation. Speaker should decide what to do - one way is to send a chairman to the meeting to observe the speaker. People who get on the platform want the crowd to talk to not to stop the meeting. Com. D'Arcy has refused the platform to this opponent twice and he just walked away. You have to take stick and never lose your cool.

Vanni (Glasgow): I was in Hyde Park a year ago and within 5 minutes I was threatened.

It was the most obnoxious bunch I had ever seen at a Party meeting and it is disgraceful for any members aware of this to try and say otherwise. Anyone who says otherwise is being used by them.

Easton (Islington): Clear that Com. Young made a very serious mistake and he has been unwilling to admit it and has put himself in a stupid position. Non-violent members have been moved to violent thoughts because of this group. Sensible thing was to try to get the responsible authorities to act as they are supposed to do - they did and a good thing too.

Davies (N.W. London): Branch told Com. Young he should not have given the platform to the disrupter. What has happened since has not been correct. Want branches to decide what they feel should be done with regard to implementing Rule 18. This all happened last February - all the publicity of this group was after the event.

Waite (Camden): I have my own method of dealing with these hecklers. I was present at the incident - there was no violence at all.

Coleman (Propaganda Committee/Central Organiser): Not an appropriate matter for ADM. EC has dealt with the matter properly by setting up a committee to examine Com. Young. N.W. London's circular does not say what Com. Davies said - that they told Com. Young not to give the platform - or that his action was wrong. Com. Knight says violent people should not be allowed the platform so why did N.W. London tell Young not to let these people on the platform. I have had to stop speaking at times when there was danger of violence - we would be the ones responsible. Must take this seriously - a group of people with intention of breaking up our meetings.

Cottis (E. London): Nothing here that couldn't have been settled with goodwill in the first place - comradeship was not there.

Davies (N.W. London): Branch wrote suggesting a meeting between N.W. London, Islington branches, comradely arriving at a solution.

SUNDAY

Comrades in Vienna wrote with greetings and news of their activities and it was agreed to send greetings in reply.

Standing Orders Committee drew attention of ADM to the continued late arrival of items for inclusion in agendas.

Agenda Items 1(a), 1(b) and 1 (c) - re Rule 10 and NPC/editing of leaflets.

Easton (Islington): EC should delegate editing of short topical leaflets to NPC - Rule 10 says this, wherever they come from. EC edited leaflet for the Live Aid event which was presented by one member, not a branch. Conference resolution is unambiguous. Don't see why this has come up again and why the EC is choosing to reinterpret the Conference Resolution.

L. Cox (EC): No axe to grind: if ADM said EC should interpret the Conference ruling along the lines of Islington's views the EC would go along with this. EC assumed Conference reference to short topical leaflets meant those for national/Party-wide use.

Cook (Birmingham): Primary focus should be expediting getting them out: specialists given the task - wrong to say there is any confusion.

Atkinson (EC/General Secretary): EC clear and Conference clear when this discussed. Did not discuss Rule 10 at the time. Tasks of NPC is to produce leaflets, it decides to do itself - requests permission or EC suggests. Branches are outside this and can get NPC to do it if it likes but NPC should send it to EC as it is for a local event. If you want to change it, alter Rule 10. It's quicker for the EC to read it if it is from a branch.

RESOLUTION - Coleman and Easton (Islington): "This ADM affirms that short topical leaflets produced by branches shall be edited by the NPC."

Coleman (Islington): Wrong to say Rule 10 was not discussed in 1982 - some members said then the procedure would conflict with the rule. EC has to recognise NPC is accountable to the EC. I edited short topical leaflets for branches when on NPC.

P. Lawrence (EC): EC anxious to apply Rule 17 and took view that branch leaflets should be edited by EC. Conference debates focussed on Rule 17. Branch leaflets covered by Rule 10. If ADM lays down procedure that will be adopted by the EC. In practice leaflets get out far quicker when dealt with by EC. Printing facilities at HQ to produce leaflets speedily. NPC main job pamphlets and drafts which take time to produce - four members dispersed over the country - EC meets every Tuesday.

Moss (NPC): Not first time NPC has been asked to edit branch leaflets without the EC

raising objections but first time there has been disagreement by the EC. No more reason for leaflets produced by branches to be edited by the EC than articles for SS. 1982 Resolution does not conflict with NPC terms of reference. Absurd for elected NPC to have to refer leaflets to the EC. If branches prefer, they can send leaflets to the EC. Re contact between NPC members - there are phones and photocopiers. Bournemouth TUC leaflet speedily dealt with by NPC but EC demanded to see it. What does the Party want us to do.

Fercy-Smith (Bristol): You have to decide whether NPC is fit body to edit or not. If it can edit for national issues why not for local issues.

Howell (Guildford): Question of devolution of work from EC to a sub-committee to enable EC to get on with general work - perhaps they could then meet once a fortnight and more members from provinces could stand for EC.

Deutz (NPC/East London): What was controversy a few years ago on NPC terms of reference. Members now saying rules don't allow things were putting a different position a few years ago. Branch considers it is for NPC to edit leaflets - no conflict between rule and terms of reference. Nothing local in the TUC leaflet. Should have a better stock of different subjects of leaflets.

Colborn (North East): Party should have confidence in a branch which should have the ability to print out their own leaflets with condition of sending a copy to the EC.

Atkinson (EC): Something introduced is that the EC does not have confidence in NPC. That is quite wrong. We feel you should have got rid of Rule 10.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 21 - 2

SSPC: Apologies were received from Coms. Critchfield and Tenner that they were unable to be present at ADM today.

Agenda Item 1(e): Colborn (North East): Don't think individual styles should be put through a type of sausage machine and all come out the same. Should be diversity of style and ideas. Some articles seem to be from outside rather than from those who are in the fight. We need to put an emotional argument. I get angry and want more of that in the SS - but not all that or all academic articles - a mixture of both.

Coleman (Islington): Go along with North East branch but we must pay attention to way article is presented and is going to make an impact. Grammar makes things more comprehensible. SSPC should encourage writers not just send articles back - should ask writers to alter this or that. Greater variety of writers in 1985 than 1975. SSPC not using enough experience of individuals and areas - eg during miners' strike we did not have articles from the North East. We should have an SS like the old golden age - first 10 years or so of the Party. We should ask new members to get on with writing.

Cook (Birmingham): So many articles are of the same length: could do with more short articles.

Howell (Guildford): Style has to be in terms of reference but articles don't have to be all of the same style. Articles are not returned helpfully.

Deutz (East London): Any committee is at mercy of what is sent to them. Doubts if SSFC is as unhelpful to new contributors as has been said. Any writer can send article to EC if they feel it is turned down unjustifiably.

A. Bradley (S.W. London): Majority of branch agree that style is included in right to reject articles; that the SS would benefit from more short articles - perhaps on lines of comments on TV programmes - anything that a Socialist point can be made on.

Graham (Bristol): Need for SS to show diversity including style. Agree with general remarks of North East. It won't reflect well on the Party if it produces an illiterate journal. Two proposals - refer back to potential contributor if major changes required, and if writers say in advance what they are prepared to have done with their article.

Maratty (North East): Branch discussed particular items submitted.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Life not just a vale of tears - super-rich and working class right at the bottom - there's a lot in between. Point out extreme poverty etc. but don't say this is all there is to it because it alienates people - a degree of objectivity is necessary.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Party has not got any specific long term or short term policies in the political arena. SS should be instrument of these. Should be aiming at, say, a build-up of propaganda getting to a peak about two years after the next government is elected. We are advertising to specific sections of people. Improvement of content and accuracy in communicating our ideas.

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RESOLUTION - Colborn and Maratty (North East): "The SSPC should take note of the diversity of styles within the Party and not reject articles purely because they do not fit into a rigid definition of style."

Bennett (Manchester): Would urge delegates to vote this down. Each member has their own view of what constitutes style.

Easton (Islington): We can be reasonably clear what style is. Should vote for this otherwise it would give wrong impression.

Vanni (Glasgow): Supporting this. There are different styles not one correct style. Not talking about dots and commas. Terrible sameness of style and length of articles.

P. Lawrence (EC): Resolution includes a censure - that it is the practice of the SSPC to edit the SS to exclude variety of style. No examples of this.

AMENDMENT - A. Bradley and Simpkins (S.W. London): "After 'styles' add 'of writing'; after 'should take' add 'greater'; delete all after 'the Party'."

Coleman (Islington): This resolution will give writers impression that if they want something done do it through the branch. Could contact members of SSPC with their views.

Cook (Birmingham): Regret SSPC not here to listen to discussion. There is always the desire to raise the standard of any journal.

C. Slapper (EC): Writers sometimes like the discipline of say length of articles required. We changed the structure of the SSPC so pretty well all the functions are with the three members. Since Conference they have failed to find assistance in layout, possibly placing them under greater strain.

L. Cox (EC): SSPC don't get many short articles. Would be a mistake and misunderstanding that they will only welcome a uniform style. The member concerned didn't give his reactions to the 1500 word response from the SSPC to his article. Rejected articles could be sent to branches for comments.

Grant (EC): The new publication of Hammersmith branch is effectively produced by the same members. This may be a factor in their self-imposed workload as to why they can't give detailed explanations to writers as well as to the EC who have raised a number of points.

Colborn (North East): Has developed way of putting a lot in relatively few words. Discussed rejected articles. Has been put off writing for the SS.

AMENDMENT CARRIED 13 - 8; SUB.-RESOLUTION CARRIED 18 - 1

Coleman (Islington): Branch had wished to raise a matter taken up with the SSPC, i.e. a serious error in the May 1985 SS - that poverty is caused by low wages. There has been no correction published.

Maratty (North East): SS took completely different view to that I expressed at meeting in Seaham on environmental factors of famine.

Atkinson (General Secretary): EC has not been asked to request SSPC to make a correction. EC should come into this as well, not be by-passed.

Coleman: Can we request the EC deals with this.

RESOLUTION - Cottis (East London) and Moss (Swansea) "That the EC Report to ADM be adopted." AGREED

Agenda Item 2(c): Vanni (Glasgow): Video is a cheap way for meetings. Branch has one experimentally. Films have not been very suitable and audience has not materialised. Alternative would be to make our own films, produce our own script and even act them out. Some films on Channel 4 are very good and some commercially made videos.

Coleman (Islington): There was a 1984 Conference resolution on this and there has been a lot of serious investigation. There is access to equipment to make a suitable film and there is a working party on this at present.

Easton (Islington): There are professional actors in the Party. Don't dismiss acting.

Deutz (East London): Should have been a report to ADM last year on video. Branch voted against this last time.

L. Cox (EC): Should be thinking positively about this. There are outlets and videos could have a wider distribution as visual propaganda than the excellent tapes. We should be prepared initially to pay for professional advice.

McColl (Bournemouth): Where would we use it - branch rooms may have no equipment. No facilities here. Arguments about style of video. We could use it for recording events e.g. debates.

Colborn (North East): Could hire videos to organisations.

Chesham (EC/Tapes Committee): Serious reservations. Forget filming a Party speaker

at a meeting
of a society
or group
Cook
not

at a meeting with people coming in late, talking etc., and backs of heads of a couple of rows of audience. We are doing tapes in a very amateur way at present but with appropriate advertising, and additional support, this effort could be increased tenfold. Cook (Birmingham): Enthusiasm at Conference and committees set up. The media will not produce the message for you. Why have we not got scripts for making tapes. Should try this first.

Howell (Guildford): We've got used to tapes which were once dismissed as trendy. To see someone speaking on screen would be more effective.

C. Slapper (EC): Feasibility study has become somewhat redundant in regard to computer and this can also apply to video. Good for educational purposes. People should get together and get things done.

Agenda Item 3(b): Maratty (North East): Socialists should not serve on juries and work in the capitalists' service, and the contrary view, were both put in the branch.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): When a member was called to jury service he wrote giving his views on the capitalist system and claimed exemption on political and conscientious grounds, and was excused.

Lester (Camden): Another member called to jury service caused problems and raised questions on the evidence etc. I have sent a note and the D of P and not heard anything more.

Easton (Islington): I am discriminated against as a blind person but might wish to object as a Socialist. The experience might be of value. Would not be a crime against working class if a Socialist did serve.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Various views in the branch. Some felt a Socialist need not object to serving on a jury. I think it is part of a Socialist's responsibility. Not all crimes are against property: there are some terrible crimes today.

Cottis (East London): Another point of view is that the jury is the best means of so-called justice. Is it preferable to have a jury rather than some other means.

Agenda Item 3(e): Maratty (North East): This arose out of the way in which the Party dealt with the miners' strike. There was no question in North East branch over the strike with relatives and friends being beaten up by the hirelings of capitalism. The leaflet called the miners' representative a Leninist and questioned democracy in the NUM, playing down 80% of miners being on strike. It reinforced what the media said. Striking to preserve a job is worthwhile. The attitude was too objective and not supportive enough. Redundancy money is taken into account for Social Security benefit purposes.

Cook (Birmingham): Still confused over the miners' strike. Did not know which way miners could come out with as much as possible. People can say later what should have been done at the start, but we are not at the start any more. Pits are now being closed we are not exactly in the same position now. The whole system is going to beat you.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Echo Com. Cook's remarks. Should give at least lip service to the workers struggle but not necessarily carte blanche to all things. Nasty things happened on both sides. 20% is a sizeable minority. North East want to ignore all the negative aspects and give 100% support but we can't do that.

Coleman (Islington): Members addressing themselves to problems which don't exist. Our support is not worth anything. Should not be discussing this - telling unions what is on sound lines - how to organise a strike. Refer to September 1927 SS statement on industrial action. We should go into a situation like that to change people's ideas not by repeating what is said on the 9 o'clock news, and being clear about what we have to say - which is for the most part what we did during the miners' strike. We should talk about Socialism and be in touch with reality.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): We support the principle of trade unionism: we support workers organising in trade unions.

Easton (Islington): We don't organise to support a strike: we are on the side of workers who take strike action to improve wages and conditions. We should have tried to counteract what is said by the media. Organisation of food etc. had some relevance to a socialist society.

Grant (EC): Important factor was the importation of coal from Eastern Europe (Poland) where they operate in worse conditions than here. Scargill's support of the suppression of Solidarity was relevant factor as Polish miners could have been appealed to to stop the supply of coal.

L. Cox (EC): Answer has got to be no, we don't support all TU action - some is contrary to what we think would be in best interests of that section or the working class as a whole.

C. Slapper (EC): One of the tricks of the media is to use the "great man" theory re Scargill. Party should not get involved with giving advice as one leaflet did re redundancy payments.

Maratty (North East): First leaflet was first impression the miner would get of the Party, which was a verbal attack on the miners' leader. First approach should have been one of support and discussion on the positive aspects of the strike. By definition trade union action will be sectional - it is not Socialist action. We are on the side of the miners but don't support them - that is crackers. We don't exclude violence in the event of a minority preventing Socialism - if you took that onto the political front where would that leave us.

Agenda Item 3(f): Colborn (North East): Branch feels Party should support any struggle for democracy where at present it does not exist. Being able to get members elected - to speak on the platform - is of benefit to a socialist movement.

Easton (Islington): Can't be against democracy being established where it does not exist. Where are the South African workers going to be if they don't establish some form of it.

Howell (Guildford): Democracy has to come first before world-wide Socialism. Someone seems to be taking notice of violence in South Africa. I'm not suggestion at all times and places violence would help - it is out of place here. We cannot say struggles for democracy are nothing to do with us. Capitalism is changing; some of it is on the road to socialism - being more democratic now.

Davies (N.W. London): We should recognise that demands for democracy are always coupled with the objectives of a political movement. Never been a pure movement for democracy. We should struggle for rights and Socialism.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Socialism cannot be established without democracy. Of the 150-odd countries in the world a small proportion have democracy. How can we oppose - but we must be wary. No question of support for terrorism or violence. Struggles for democracy often linked with political aspirations but you can't write the whole thing off.

Coleman (Islington): Democracy has to be thought of in terms of action of people so that the majority can get its way. We support this even if they elect a dictator. Statement in September 1927 SS urges people's struggle, etc.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): German people voted in 1937 and got what they wanted. A Socialist Party cannot exist in a non-democratic situation. We have not defined democracy: what exists can be eroded. The idealistic democratic society does not exist. Enemies of the working class have benefitted by the advocacy of violence. We haveto advocate Socialism.

Young (N.W. London): Democracy necessary to establish socialism. You can't have situation where just the working class struggles for democracy. Struggle has been to develop industry etc.

Moran (Islington): We could welcome reforms in certain parts of the world which might bring closer the day for Socialism but we can't go on campaigns to support other than our objective.

Agenda Item 3(c): Vanni (Glasgow): Branch supported Bournemouth's proposal but that was the opinion of those at the meeting that week. Branch is divided on this. We accept that but for the most formal occasions we should drop the "Great Britain" in the title. Question of the name being stolen or another group claiming the funds a good point but the endless confusion and explaining to people, and the name on the literature are all valid reasons for not changing the Party's name completely. It is Party members who raise this issue, not outsiders. You don't waste time arguing with someone over this. Bournemouth did not see it being a great benefit. Only motive for change is to tidy things up - a cosmetic exercise in line with companion parties. Two companion parties had their name stolen and that was why they changed their names - it was forced on them.

Graham (Bristol): 5 branches have responded to the suggestion of a Party Poll. Bristol Group was in favour and I am fairly certain that as a branch it will take the

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same view, i.e. agreeing to a Party Poll, not to changing the name.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Branch for a long time favoured a change of name. Things have changed and the Party is now better known and established as THE Socialist Party. Should retain existing title for some time to come.

Howell (Guildford): Not a cosmetic change or piddling objection to understanding the Party's case. Islington's circular contains scare tactics and worse. Difficulties they refer to are not insurmountable. Reason for problems is that we fight with one hand tied behind our backs, use wrong language, outmoded concepts. Our readers think there are a lot of socialisms. More realistic chance of our name being hijacked than our money.

Atkinson (General Secretary): You cannot have a Party Poll on having a Party Poll. You have to decide what it is about. In this case the Poll would be asking "Are you in favour of changing the name of the Party to 'World Socialist Party (Britain)'?"

Coleman (Islington): Sizeable minority in the branch in favour of change of name: not suggesting this would free us from all difficulties. We have communication problem with the working class and the name is not the main obstacle. Problem if another party set up with the old name. There are people we could get back into the Party who have dropped out for years or who have never bothered to join - it has to be the same party they knew before, with the same name. We refer to ourselves increasingly as The Socialist Party (not the series of initials) because we are the Socialist Party. Some may be put off by the word 'Socialism' - many young people are put off by the word 'Party'. We could get rid of these words. It would be folly to change it once but don't change it every year like dues.

Fleischmann (Central): Would gladly agree to change the name, but would refer to the World Socialist which is not selling too well. There are other journals with the word socialist in it. Suggest it would sell better if it had some name giving some idea of our position.

McColl (Bournemouth): Branch split about this and simplest method seemed a poll of the Party so we proposed this but the General Secretary suggested we had to propose a Party name. There have been some strange arguments. Let's have a poll - get it out of the way and get on with Socialism.

Easton (Islington): It has come up time and time again. At first I thought it a good idea to come in line with companion parties. Don't believe jargon puts people off.

C. Slapper (EC): World Socialist No. 4 is out. You can't specify what it is about with a title. The simplest title is The Socialist Party.

Chesham (EC): A possible compromise could be a different preposition - The Socialist Party in Great Britain - and still call ourselves the SPGB.

Davies (N.W. London): If we thought 1000 people would come in tomorrow we would change the name: not sentimental about it.

Devine (Edinburgh): I thought we would be talking about why we should change the name to World Socialist Party (Great Britain) but have heard talk of getting rid of terms Socialism, Working Class, Class War - in favour of change to World Socialist Party (Great Britain). Would be more readily communicated to those not familiar with our views and their questions - are we associated with the Labour Party, and the nationalist implications of the name.

Hopwood (S.W. London): Change of name proposed to fit with companion parties. WSP/US is nearly finished; Party in Ireland has become active because of active members. New Zealand and Australia have groups of active members. We are not at present a World Socialist movement and when we are we will have to change our name.

McColl (Bournemouth): Plaid Cymru have on their agenda a motion to change their name to the Socialist Party of Wales or the National Party of Wales.

Atkinson (Legacies Committee): I had a phone call from a solicitor re a member who wished to make a Will in our favour provided the Party does not change its name.

Vanni (Glasgow): Suggested the word World qualifies the word Socialism - we could add Democratic as it also qualifies the word. re Party Poll settling the matter once and for all - it was discussed as recently as last Conference and the suggestion was defeated by large majority. Why are these objections always to the spoken word and H.O. not flooded with letters about the name. If you do change the name you will get bitterness like we have never seen.

Agenda Item 3(d): Simpkins (S.W. London): This is my point of view - branch permitted me to open on this. Facts don't demonstrate the cause of tension in the modern world

is primarily over markets so why do we keep on saying it. There is struggle for markets and for supremacy between the two super-powers but this does not lead to war. Struggle for markets not between Russia and America but between America and Western Europe. That between Middle East countries and Israel not primarily over markets: terrorism not over markets.

Graham (Bristol): Delegate did not address himself to the Item on the agenda, which says "... an important cause..." and this is compatible with the position of the Party.

Lester (Camden): Statement is over-simplification. War in the Falklands was for strategic reasons concerned with the Antarctic. We have to go into it more deeply.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Capitalism is the cause of war - world capitalist class divided into sections and they must compete and have to get control of strategic areas, trade routes, access to exploitable populations and try to deny access to their competitors. It is a question of potential markets and future accumulation.

C. Slapper (EC): Usually the capitalists know roughly what they're going to fight over. There is market for production goods as well as consumer goods; access to resources and creation of markets.

L. Cox (EC): It is simplified statement but not over-simplification. We have to put in few words large-scale concepts. Com. Simpkins has lost contact with real world.

Grant (EC): First world war between Germany and Britain though likely contenders for years was Britain and France. Next conflict could be USA/Russia or USA/China. Markets are an important factor - middle east conflicts cited which don't relate to the large market quarrels but many involved say they are fighting the wars of the big interests by proxy. The problems we see are directly concerned with raw materials etc.

Moss (Swansea): It doesn't mean every single war is caused necessarily by specific economic rivalries but the machinery for war is always there for when they break out.

Coleman (Islington): Simplifications are necessary. Theory must always be in line with what we know. We have to rely on what we know, which is still an impressive argument.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Some members have put up a convincing argument. Russia does not necessarily have the same motivation as avowedly capitalist countries.

Agenda Item 3(g): A. Bradley (S.W. London): This is on the Agenda because we felt the Party Meeting and previous discussions rather begged the question.

Moss (Swansea): Answer from branch is Yes.

P. Lawrence (EC): Would have liked to contribute but only 10 minutes left which is a farcical situation.

Any other business:

Premises: A. Bradley (S.W. London): Branch thanks the Premises Committee for the very good work done by the Committee recently.

Austrian Party: Fleischmann (Central): Suggested that the Austrian group would like more contact, and he proposed a group of Party members might get together in Austria or anywhere agreed, for a general meeting of a week or two - perhaps a summer-school, with the Austrian members etc. Com. Fleischmann offered his own premises in Denmark and offered his services teaching German or Italian for members.

A vote of thanks was extended to the members who had provided the excellent catering.

ADM adjourned at 6.20 p.m.

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